

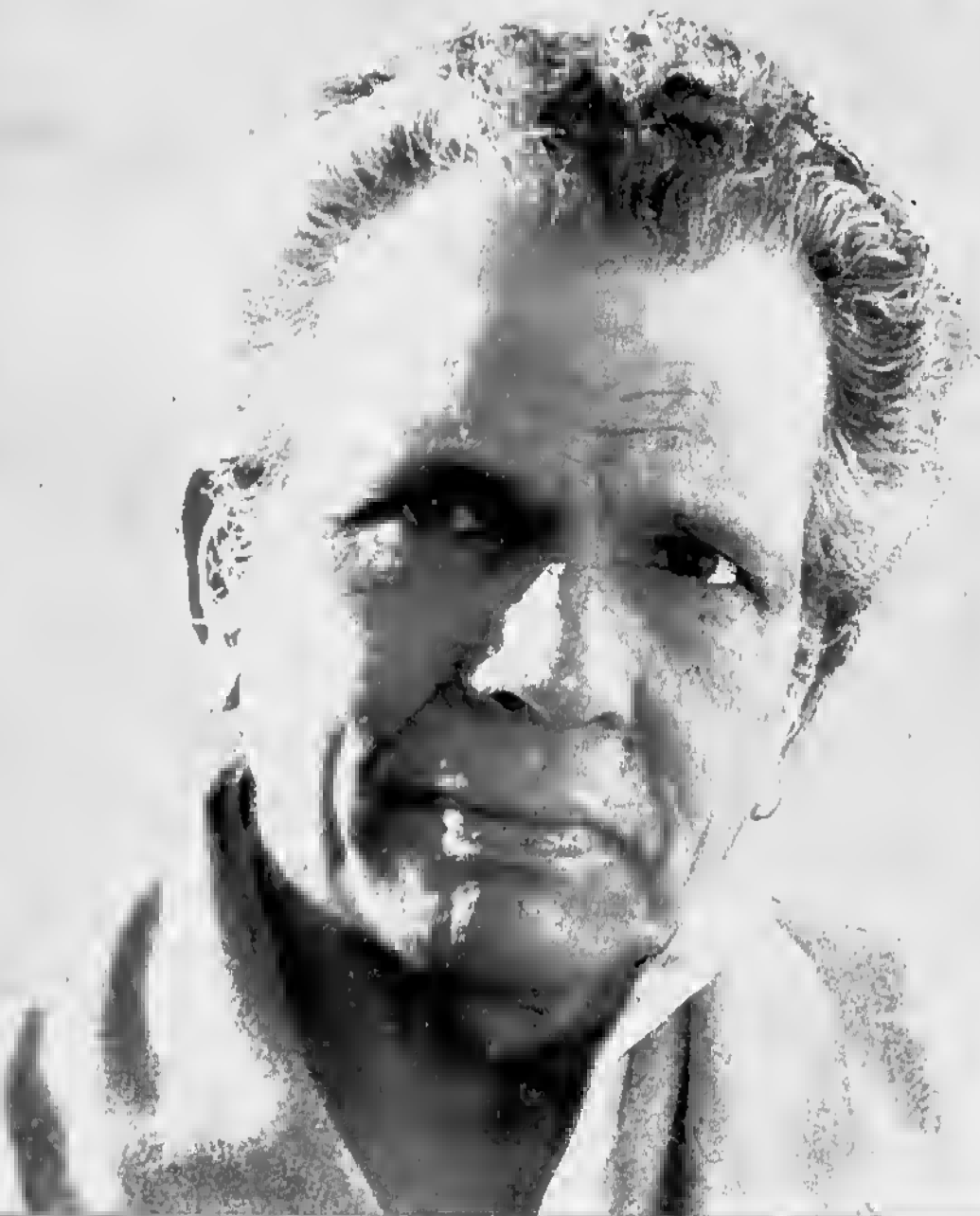


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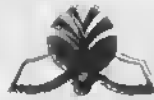
# PHOENIX

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# PHOENIX

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## From the Editor

*It is a happy co-incidence that the 50th year of our Independence (1947) happened to be the birth centenary year of more than one celebrated Indian musician. Immortal names in the field like vocalist Chittoor Subramanya Pillai, 'Nagaswara Chakravarthi' T.N. Rajarathnam Pillai and flautist Tiruppanbaram Sivanmatha Pillai were all born 100 years ago in 1897. The event was celebrated in several parts of the country by reputed musical institutions. The local Percussive Arts Centre used its annual 'Krishnotsavam' to remember these unforgettable personalities.*

*In that August company is the inimitable Hindustani vocalist, 'Badi Onkaru' Thakur. Naturally, votaries of that genre paid their respectful homage to that savant too. One such locale in our own City was the Hindustani music school run by one of the maestro's own disciples, Prof. Sontakke. That occasion late last year was marked by a day-long musical fare in which S. Shankar, the well-known Carnatic vocalist, Raghunatha Nayak, the popular tabla player and Vinayak M. Torvi, the eloquent Hindustani vocalist paid their homage to the renowned Guru by their individual concerts.*

*I mean that solemn day onwards I have been trying to explore the possibilities of writing a piece on that savant for this journal with little success. In answer to my suggestion, the ever-willing columnist Praveena Lochu came out with some very valuable biographical data on him. It was in that context that a 'Face to Face' (introduction) on the late Sushela Mehta was prepared, she being the author of that solid material. Excerpts from one of Sushela's issue was culled to arrive at that article. But due to extraneous reasons the MSS could not be used. Hence the object has remained unfulfilled.*

*Meanwhile, our resourceful correspondent did the next best thing to produce an exhaustive interview with Prof. Sontakke himself. As a worthy disciple of the veteran, he gives intimate glimpses of his Guru. It makes engrossing reading, though this doesn't mean a more detailed article on the renowned vocalist is shelved!*

**CORRIGENDUM :** The surname of Suman and Ramani, members of the Editorial Board of **KALA**, a quarterly from Toronto (Canada), ought to read as **Ramakrishnan**. Not **Ramachandran** as mentioned in this column in the August issue.

## NRI Dancers Thrive on Self-Assurance



Preeti Krishna

One of the notable features in a Bharathanatyam recital by NRIs is a remarkable self-confidence, free from inhibitions. The reason for this well nigh nonchalant attitude even in those who are fresh after Ranga Pravesham, is the unrestrained pampering they enjoy. Priya Mittal (California (U.S.A.)) who figured in an Every Friday Cultural Evening recently is an exception.

Student of Indumati Ganesh, Priya revealed a convincing steadiness in laya in the invocatory number itself. But her stance fell short in grace, an indistinct 'sama pada' adding to the discomfiture. Nor was her 'ure mandli' always in place, though her 'anga shuddha' could not be faulted.

By this time it was equally obvious that her Abhinaya was superfluous, not taking one beyond a pleasant disposition.

True, a Nava Rasi number could not be a test piece, portrayal for an involved composition like that being beyond the comprehension of a young lass of her age. The well-known "Sringara Kshitinamini" left one wondering if she was fully conversant with the several sequence that dot the delineation.

The day's Varnam (Abhogi) highlighting Virahutkhandita Nayika evoked no better fields, her neat 'thattu-mettu', meaningful 'sthanakas' and their corresponding 'hasthas' sustaining the interest. It is these elements that hold promise in this fledgling dancer. As impressive was the vocal refrain of Radha Badri in the unusually extended recital.

Similar were the feelings that London based Serthalakshmi Namalakumar's Bharathanatyam recital for the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan

aroused. True, this disciple of Prakash Yelagudile of the Bhavan's London Branch, is much younger in age. But there was elegance in her stance, an unhurried laya in the opening Pushpanjali giving her a flying start.

Sita was as confident while disposing the well-knit Shukattas in the familiar Dhanyasi varnam. Her 'angikas' were neat, subscribing to the limed demands, though short in flexions. But Sita's mukhya was no match in this trite Nritta, the Virahutkhandita Nayika remaining elusive in the 'samharis'.

Sita however came to her own in the depiction for the simplistic narrative in Yamamelli. Kane (Shivaramini). Her exposition for the Khandita Nayika-based Jayali Saka Nimma Suka (Kapi) was equally explicit in its Bheebhatsu filled glances. But her long drawn-out self-pampering seemed presumptuous, rather redundant in an ethos where she herself, and not the viewers are the aliens!

### Taped Music

Like the London-based Serthalakshmi, her compuers Rayashree Kannat and Mridul Rajlurgi (of Nupura) also faced a challenge to dance for taped music, sans their Guru's Nattavangam. The only difference is that while the former appeared totally indifferent to the oddity, the two local girls all but floundered in the major

aspects in their hour-long recital for the Bangalore Lalithkala Academy.

The only redeeming feature is that while dueting, as they did in the three-tiered invocatory, their steady laya, neat thattu-mettn and flowing 'angikas' suffused confidence. But neither Rajashree in her 'Thana-varnam' (nava-ragamalika) nor Mridul in portraying DVG's 'Antahpurageetha' "Yence Mahanandave" (Vasanthi) was equal to sustain that certitude in their stance or glances. Contrarily, even the simple 'sancharis' in either case failed to surface convincingly. It's



Sowmya Shashidhara

obvious that they have yet to outgrow the inhibitions of a fledgling.

### Sure Stance

As against this uncertainty, Preeti Krishna who danced under her own Natya 'Tarangini Arts Academy' was brimming with confidence. Her sure stance came to the fore at the invocatory stage itself, tant 'thattu-mettn' coupled with an array of fluid 'sthanakas' enriching the portrayal.

The rare Dasharupa Darshana of Dandayudapani Pillai filled the Varnam for the day. Though the 'Sthayi' here is descriptive in nature, a festoon of well-knit 'koreis' enriches its Nritya. Preeti ran through the varied 'Theeramanams' with practiced ease, a steady 'aremandi' and languorous 'angikas' lending credibility to her 'anga-shuddha'.

The denouement for the "Dasharupa" also had to draw more on her 'angikas' as her 'drishti' has to do with greater restraint if they are to be fully purposeful. Often, she also appeared indifferent to the dictum "Yatha hasthasthatho drishtih".

Gargi Sharma, a student of Anuradha-Sridhar, who danced around the same time appeared as sure in her line and rhythm, proof of solid



Anuradha Godigar

grounding. The invocatory piece vouched for this, though the Vachana that followed had little to offer by way of aesthetic satisfaction.

She was on safer ground in the familiar 'Thodi varnam' "Roopam Jeechi". The Nritya itself had a flourish, flexion-filled 'angikas' and alluring 'utplavanas' embellishing the Jathis. Even in her Abhinaya, the Sthayi displayed a definite profile, though in the 'sancharis' her facials fell short in enlivening the purport. But there is no doubt of her positive approach.

### Two Ranga Praveshas

To write about a Ranga Pravesha in Bharathanatyam could be a delicate proposition. While no one can expect a

Music, Dance Institutions are invited to send news & reports on their activities. Articles and features are also welcome.

Cassettes on Music & Books may be sent for review.



Seethalakshmi Nand dancer

debut to be flawless, it is equally important that one avoids patronising praise which is of little consequence.

But the month of August saw two Rang Praveshas which were unusual for more than one reason. The first is that of Anuradha Guligar which was as important for the debutante as to her 'guru' Nirupama Rajendra who is almost as young as herself. Nirupama who is competent both in Kathak and Bharathanatyam, has taken the mantle upon herself and one dare say she has added one more feather to her cap.

In Anuradha, Nirupama has undoubtedly got a devoted student. Her keenness and enthusiasm surfaced at the invitational stage itself, the taut

Jatiswaram (Rasikapriya) standing out for its sprightly line and rhythm. The Nritta thrays in the Varnam (Ragamalika) were as lively, though the Adavus fell short in variety. What was more remarkable is the mobility of her face, a department where most beginners fail. Anuradha's mukhija revealed a mature understanding of the purport (Virahatkhandita). The Kshetravya padma 'Chudam', exemplifying Parakerya Nayika, calls for a studied approach and Ann's portrayal bordered on the profound.

Sowmya Shashidhara was the other debutante. A student of Padmini Rao, her recital also appeared hardly like that of a beginner's show, marked as it was for its sure-footedness and confidence.

The long years Sowmya has given to learning is worthwhile evidenced in her steady

'thattu-mettu' and faultless 'arimandi'. If her Nritta as in Jatiswaram (Khamas) was intense, her subtle elucidation for Anamlanata Madu (Kedera guda) was pleasing. In the stately Varnam, Innu Ennamam ('Charukeshi'), the Adavus glittered in variety, but Sowmya's 'angikas' especially in the rounding of fell short in grace, though her 'anga shuddham' could not be faulted.

In her Abhinaya, it was evident that Sowmya enjoyed the lovely sentiments. Her face is certainly not immobile, but has yet to mature to portray the involved Nayikabhava in the composition. That is how a straight 'Khandita' in Varipodu Chalu (Kapi) came alive in her delineation without much hassles. A narrative like "Chemlana Vasavida" (Vachana) was easier still to enact.

— ATREYA

### *Mysore-USA Cultural Exchange Mooted*

Sri Lalithakala Academy a cultural organisation of Mysore has several innovative ideas to its credit. One of them is the "EXCHANGE PROGRAMMES" with TRUTH Land Nador where a festival of Karnataka was held for the first time with a bandwagon of artistes from Mysore and Bangalore in '95 and '96.

B S S. Rao, Secretary and the Founder Trustee of the centre while touring the USA held discussions with cultural organisations in Boston and San Francisco for promoting young talent looking for platform so that the younger generations could gain confidence. He has suggested ways to enlist the names of talented artistes from the city.

Mr Rao gave an idea of the various projects like "Musical Features", Music and Dance QUIZ, Workshops to produce dance ballets utilising the talent available in USA.

There was appreciation from some artistes, temples, cultural organisations at Califorma, Arizona, Boston and other places. Mr Rao and Vidwan Mysore Srinath are likely to visit Buffalo, Cleveland, and Pittsburg before they leave for India. They may stop over a day at Kandahampt on route to discuss about exchange programmes with at Malaysia who has a hookup with Singapore, Bangkok and Brunei.

## Was it all Worthwhile?

The year 1997-98 which marked the 50th year of our Independence, justifiably prompted unrestrained celebrations all over the country and in Indian settlements abroad. People in all walks of life organised gala functions, some stretching throughout the year, to make the event memorable. Predictably, the Indian Parliament gave the lead by holding a special joint session, with celebrated vocalists like Pandit Bhimsen Joshi and 'melody queen' Lata Mangeshkar rendering the invocation. The fervour all over was as pervasive as was witnessed on that historic August 15, 1947.

The spirit of freedom in Karnataka was as invigorating as in the rest of the country. Almost all institutions associated with one form of art or another organised programmes befitting the event. Throughout the year, invitations connected with such events were marked with the superscription of the simple, but elegant logo, symbolising the festivities.

The Directorate of Kannada and Culture which is supposed to direct and monitor all such activities in the State under the Ministry of Kannada and Culture, lived up to its reputation by linking all its direct and sponsored programmes with the year-long celebrations. These programmes which started one year ago, on August 14, 1997, were spread over the whole year, culminating in a marathon 50-hour non-stop cultural extravaganza from

August 13, 1998 in Bangalore. The valedictory six-day long programme was actually launched on August 10. Besides the Ravindra Kalakshetra which was the venue of the unique uninterrupted fiesta, the programmes were spread over 20 centres in the City, though not all of them could be passed as presentable or worthy of such a solemn occasion. Naturally, many of the 2000 and odd artistes who were slated to perform in such ramshackle locales were grumpy about the arrangements. Nor was the killing itself free from anomalies. If in some cases two heavy programmes like a classical Carnatic and Hindustani recitals were to follow one another, there were others where the whole duration was to be filled by a solo 'sugam sangeet' or a patriotic songs concert. How anyone can imagine such events to sustain by themselves is beyond one's imagination.

More importantly, what had irked the artistes and the artiste groups listed in the unusual 24 page bill of fare is that the Directorate

which is the major sponsoring authority should have expected them all to perform sans remuneration, not even conveyance charges met. While some known artistes put forth valid alibis to keep away from the thankless ordeal, a majority, out of sheer obligation, had no option than to succumb to the suggestion. Indeed, not many of them were ready to rub the authorities on the wrong side. With the result, there were few recognised names, especially among dancers, taking part in the arduous exercise, something that seemingly gave a dubious sense of achievement to the Directorate. But the question is, does not such a proposition amount to exploitation? While even non-script organisations that thrive on public donations are grudging enough to pay their guest artistes, it certainly is no good reflection on a governmental agency to turn away artistes empty-handed, the trinket that was offered as a memento only adding insult to injury. If it couldn't afford a programme of that magnitude, why venture it at all! Was all that worthwhile?

— S.N. Chandrasekhar

### Quiz

Can you guess the author of the texts mentioned below?

- |                       |                         |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| (A) NATYA SASTRA      | (B) BRIHADDESI          |
| (C) SANGEET MAKARANDA | (D) SANGEET RATNAKARA   |
| (E) GITA GOVINDA      | (F) SWARAMELA KALANIDHI |

### Last month's Quiz solved

1. Pooja Kunitha, 2. Mandala Kunitha, 3. Yakshagana, 4. Dollu Kunitha, 5. Draupadi

Quiz Master

## In The Long Line of Dueters



M.S. Sheela at the Unveiling of LV's Bust in Trichy

The leisurely ease of Ramaprasad and Ravikumar, popularly known as Malladi Brothers, in their concert for Devagiri Sangatha Sabha late August, helped listeners to recapture the high profile of a long line of dueters in Carnatic music.

Right from their initial Varnam, their musical expertise and communicative abilities went hand in hand, providing a solid start. Ksheenammi, the Mukhari masterpiece of Thyagaraja, steered the concert on a sparkling course. The duo built up the tempo with an extended portrayal of Purvi-Kalyani (Ninnuvina Namadi) by Ramaprasad and Kambodi (Sri Raghavaraprameya) by Ravikumar. Though the former acquired tints of melodic charm straight away, Kambodi

appeared a wee bit digressive before arriving on a stimulating format. But the famous Thyagaraja Kriti spurred interest with the duo's full-throated vocalism.

H. K. Venkatarani on the violin spun out a subdued, but persuasive tone.

In music, solo is the norm. But, husband and wife teams are not uncommon. More familiar is a duo of siblings, either brothers or sisters dueting. But, an entire family coming together, deployed in different roles on a concert stage is a rarity.

It is this feature that lent a uniqueness to a Carnatic vocal recital at the Indian Institute of World Culture early August. A whole family, excepting for violinist Nalina Mahan, comprising the two parents, son, daughter and

daughter-in-law, was in concert that evening!

That was the family of Bangalore K. Venkatarani, well-known both as a seasoned ghatam vidwan and an astute organiser. As is his wont, he was playing the ghatam in company with his son V. Krishna on mridangam. Wife G. R. Jaya, daughter V. Kalavathi and daughter-in-law Harini Krishna were the vocalists.

The concert itself was wholesome, the celebrated Kambodi Varnam giving it a rollicking start. Scope for display of individual talent was not wanting. While Jaya's Mukhari stood out for its emotional fervour, Kalavathi's Purvi-Kalyani was melodious, though not free from tartness. The father and son combined animatedly to make the 'thani avarthanam' interesting.

### Krishnotsava

The annual Krishnotsava organised by the Perennial Arts Centre had an added significance this year. It was a youth music festival with a difference. Besides assuming the charge of an inter-State talent promotion scheme, the Centre during the five-day festival celebrated the birth centuries of musical giants like violinist Kumbakonam Rajammickam Pillai, vocalist Chittoor Subramanya Pillai, flute T. N. Swaminatha Pillai and our own H. Pattabhar (mridangam). Tributes to the respective stalwarts were paid on each day and their services to music recalled.

An array of blossoming





A Whole Family in Concert

talent figured in the concerts each day. Among the main artistes were young Hosahalli G. Anantha (disciple of H. R. Narayana Rao), violinist Hosahalli K. Venkataram and H. K. Subha Rao (disciples of Lalgudi Jayaraman), N. Ramanathan of Hyderabad (disciple of H. S. Gururajachar), and K. Prashant (disciple of Seta Rajan and S. Shankar). The other concert was a flute duet by B. K. Anantharam and his son, Master Amit A. Nadig. Violin accompaniment was provided by Hosahalli K. Venkataram, Dayakar (Bhadravati), J. K. Sridhar and T. S. Krishnamurthy, M. G. Gopalakrishna (mridangam), R. Sathyakumar (ghatam), T. Raja Ganesha (mridangam, Trichy), L. Bhimachar (morsing), H. N. Shiva Shankaraswamy (mridangam, Mysore), K. Sadagopal (khanjira), M. Vasudeva Rao (mridangam) and A. Suresh Kumar (ghatam) dispensed the role of percussion. Overall, it was an engaging, purposeful festival.

#### LV's Bust Unveiled

A series of concerts, named

LV Memorial Music Concerts marked the first death anniversary of L. Venkataraman, Hon. Secretary of Rasika Ranjana Sabha, Trichy, early August. A bust of LV who was the Secretary of the 84-year old Sabha for 25 years, was unveiled on the occasion. Well-known vocalist M. S. Sheela of Bangalore, who was one of the artistes to perform in the memorial concerts, gave away the prizes to winners in the annual Amateur Music competitions.

Papanasham Ashok Ramani, Sudha Raghunathan, Raja Kumar Bharati and ace violinist M. S. Gopalakrishnan were the other artistes.

#### Chittoor Centenary

The 56th music and dance festival of the Thyagaraja Festival Committee, Tirupati, coincided with the birth centenary of Chittoor Subramanya Pillai, a veteran vocalist and a devotee of Thyagaraja, who was responsible in starting the festival five decades ago. The committee has since succeeded in building a temple for the musician-saint. An auditorium as an adjunct to it is also being planned by the committee.

Besides a Seminar on the music of Chittoor, there were three concerts on each day of the fortnight long festival. Dr. T. Loganathan Sharma, a disciple of the maestro, figuring in the inaugural concert. The lone representative from Karnataka was the promising V. Kalavathy with S. Yashasvi on violin, Anand Dattatreya Sharma on mridangam and



Malladi Brothers Rama Prasad and Ravikumar in Concert

Bangalore K. Venkataram on Ghata.

### Bangalore Vocalist Honoured

Malati Lakshman of Bangalore who has settled down in Jamshedpur, was the only Carnatic vocalist among the 10 musicians honoured by the Singbhoom District Hindi Sahitya Sammelan at Jamshedpur July last. The dulcet-voiced vocalist who had been initiated into music by her mother R. Thangammal, had honed her vocalism under veteran A. Subba Rao. In Jamshedpur both the late Thangammal and Malati had become popular as consistent performers and reliable teachers of Carnatic music.

### Suvarna Bharata

Swarasatkar, the popular music school of Shyamala G. Bhaye, celebrated "Suvarna Bharata" with a composite feature involving dance, drama

and music. Well-known theatre personalities like litterateur S. Rudramurthy Shastri, director Srinivasa Prabhu and dancer Usha Datar combined their expertise to unfold a concept of Shyamala on India's heritage and achievements.

Its production at the Ravindra Kalakshetra on August 10 was preceded by full-house shows at Athani and Dharwad.

### Krishnanubhava

The varied musical compositions on Krishna are as fascinating as his own presence. Listening to a random selection itself could be an experience as evidenced in a programme jointly conceived by Hamsadhvani Creations and Ananya for Krishna Jayanti. Titled Krishnanubhava, in the first part vocalists R. Chandrika and V. Kalavathy with a commentary by Nandini Ramaswamy vocalised familiar

compositions of Muthuswamy Dikshitar, Vyasaraja, Thyagaraja, Jayadeva and Annamacharya to highlight Sri Krishna's multi-face all life.

M. S. Sheela who had planned the 120-minute programme rounded it off with a melodious recital. The concert itself was a departure from the usual format, a flute instead of a violin along with the ubiquitous mridangam providing the accompaniment.

Despite the fact that an experienced V. K. Raman was wielding the flute, the experiment failed to click, the wind instrument falling short in its resonance to make its presence felt.

A soulful alapana of Bhairavi and the celebrated kriti Balagopala, rendered with her usual gusto, was the highspot of that recital. Anur Dattatreya Sharma on the mridangam was in his elements.

ESSENCE

### Belgaum dancer to the fore



Prize Winners: Parshwanath S. Upadhi & Padmini S. Upadhyay

Parshwanath S. Upadhyay of Belgaum won the first prize in the senior wing of the State level Bharathanatyam competition conducted by Sai Arts International. In the junior wing Padmini S. Upadhyay of Bangalore was the first prize winner. They are the students of Ravindra Sharma and Narmada respectively.

The prizes in cash ranging between Rs. 5,000 and Rs. 500 were given away at a glittering function at the ADA auditorium on August 28. Dance guru K. Shiva Rao was felicitated on the occasion.

The second and third prize winners respectively in the competition held in connection with Yuva Nrityotsav 1998, were Shobha T. K. (student of Revathi Narasimhan), Aparna Vaidyanathan (student of Narmada) senior, and M. Ashwini Rao (student of Shamala Murali Krishna) and Deeksha S. Talapady (student of Indira Kadambi) juniors.

A highlight of the function was the honouring of theatre technicians: Krishna A., Sekar N., Puttiah, Anjanappa, Mache Gowda of Ravindra Kalakshetra, Anand M. S. of Guru Nanak Bhavan; Ramu of Prabhat Sound-Light; Muniyappa of Yavanika; and Rajappa of ADA Ranga Mandira.

## Evolution of Indian Dance

**NRITYALOKA (Kannada):** Natyacharya K. Murali-dhara Rao, Athree Book Centre, 4, Shivaravathi Building, Balmatta, Mangaluru-575001. pp. xii + 504, Rs. 300

**N**rityaloka is an illustrated reference work on Indian dances. Its author Natyacharya, K. Muralidhara Rao, here examines the mythological, historical and scientific evolution and development of Indian dances with particular stress on Bharathanatyam.

The 18 chapters, cover the various aspects of classical dances: In literature, music, sculpture and other forms of culture to establish a milieu among them. Technical terms are explained in depth supported by photographs and

line drawings. The 345 line drawings and 63 photographs (black and white) lend a new dimension to the work; one can almost self teach oneself Bharathanatyam by following the book. The 108 Karanas (as depicted in Sri Chidambarakshetra Devasthanam) are very attractive and useful; so are the Navarasas photographs. The one-one correspondence between the verbal explanation and the drawings puts before reader several visuals from the Bharathanatyam Stage.

Copies available with Mr. G. T. Narayana Rao at 8, Athree, Kinnakshi Hospital Road, Saraswathipuram Mysore 570009 (Ph.: 543 759).

- G. T. Narayana Rao

## For Music Lovers

**Sri Thyagaraja Vijayn of Muthiah Bhagavathar:** (Translation from Sanskrit to Kannada) by Dr. V. S. Sampathkumara-charya, pp. 117, Rs. 40.

**Veeneyu Neralinalli.** (Kannada) Dr. Mysore V. Doreswamy Iyengar, pp. 192, Rs. 95. Publisher: Geetha Book House, K. R. Circle, Mysore-570 001.

**I**t might come as a surprise to lovers of Carnatak music that Harikeshanallur Mathiah Bhagavathar (1877-1945), an ardent devotee of Thyagaraja, wrote a life-sketch of the great Vaggeyakara, in Sanskrit verse. This is in seven "Sargas" totalling to 487 stanzas. The

other "Kavya" in Sanskrit is Sri Thyagaraja Charita by T. Simlaresha Sharma (1937) in 1800 stanzas. The interesting feature of the work under review is that the first letter of the first shloka of each "Sarga" stands for a sapta-svara note, in the arahana order. Taken together, the opening stanzas of the seven sargas along with the enclosing mangala shloka which commences with "Sa", covers a full octave & have the potential of being set to & sung as a ragamalika piece.

Dr. V. S. Sampathkumara-charya, the eminent historian-musicologist of Mysore, who has authored several books in Kannada on Sri Thyagaraja and a two-volume Encyclo-

paedia on Carnatak music, has translated the present work into Kannada. It includes a life-sketch of the composer, "Padartha Chandrika" gloss by Nyayashiromani K. A. Krishnasharma, Introduction in English by Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer and in Sanskrit by Vidyabhushana Pandit V. Venkatarama Sharma have also been translated into Kannada and included along with a foreword by Vid. R. Chandrashekhariah of Mysore. All these throw light on the great composer, his life and works and thus make the book a valuable reference work.

"Veeneyu Neralinalli" is an autobiographical account of Padmabhushan Mysore V. Doreswamy Iyengar (1920-1997) the well known Vainika who passed away last year. The narration was transcribed by Bharati Kasargod and serialised in "Sudha", the popular Kannada weekly. The narration is lucid, very readable, punched with refined humour and covers the entire life span of the renowned artiste. Introduction is by the celebrated Kannada poet Dr. Pu. Thi. Narasimhaachar. The book's value gets enhanced by the inclusion of several rare, well-produced photographs. A table showing the important milestones in the life of the vainika is a bonus.

For the music world, the presence of V. Doreswamy Iyengar is still alive in its collective memory. As days pass, this work will be a useful reference book to students and lovers of classical music, apart from holding a mirror to the cultural life of the erstwhile Mysore State.

-K. Raghuvendra Rao

## Vinayak Torvi turns Fifty

The unbridled enthusiasm manifest in the atmosphere was indicative of the popularity of the individual whose 50th birthday was being celebrated. As observed by Ashwini Bhide Deshpande, the effulgent Hindustani vocalist who sang on the occasion, it was a very pleasant function, an expression of the unbounded affection in which Pandit Vinayak Torvi is held by his students, fellow artistes and admirers.

Yes, Vinayak, the Hindustani vocalist is fifty, years studded with achievements all the way. Coming as he did from a musically-inclined family (father Mallar Rao was a well-known professional Keertankar), Vinayak grew up and trained in an exclusive musical circle, comprising T.R. Gurn Rao, Narayan Dandapur and Narayan Mazumdar. That ground work was further chiselled in his study for a master's degree in music.

By that time Vinayak had developed a vision of an artistic flight soaring high. For the fulfilment of that vision he needed reinforcement from a solid source like the one provided by veteran Gayanacharya Gurn Rao Deshpande. Under this seasoned mentor Vinayak mastered the difficult nuances like stage by stage expansion for varying layas, the finer aspects of taan elaboration and bouncing intricately placed 'sargams'. With the exposure to inspiring music of titans of the time like Mallikarjun Mansoor, Gangubai Hangal and



Pt. Vinayak M. Torvi

Basavaraj Rajgurni, these very elements underwent a process of assimilation and transformation, before settling down to an eclectic style. His assiduous practice combined with constant intellectual interaction with a musical genius like Pandit Bhimsen Joshi has further helped Vinayak to mould a style to suit his vision of musical efflorescence.

By the time his banking job brought him to Bangalore, Vinayak had outgrown the fledgling stage in the art. His concerts both on and off the AIR had won him a number of fans. His style emphasised by a deep, sonorous voice had an irresistible appeal. Yet he was reluctant to take students lest that cut into his hours of 'riyaz'. But once he yielded he at once proved that he is as reliable a teacher as he was a consistent performer.

The time of his arrival was

also such that there was growing appreciation of Hindustani music. Already more than one group had succeeded in organising periodical concerts that invariably attracted sizeable audiences. But Vinayak's priority was to continue the annual musical nights he had launched earlier in Dharwad to pay homage to his Gurn. This he did as earnestly, and despite its unusual timings right through the night his effort proved an instant success, becoming a major event eagerly awaited by artistes and music-lovers alike. Its offshoot Yuva Sangeet Utsav has gained as wide-spread popularity.

Thus, Vinayak, though turned fifty has established himself as a senior dedicated artiste, not confined to self-promotion but to the art itself and the artistes young and old. And that is something for satisfaction.

— CHADDU

## Muralidhar : Commitment to Dance is Complete

- K. Raghunath Rao



Natyacharya  
K. Muralidhar Rao, Mysore

The Jagannathan Palace auditorium in Mysore had adorned a festive look on May 25 this year. That was for a function organised by Natyacharya K. Muralidhar Rao Samman Samithi, comprising the eminent Bharathamatya guru's disciples, admirers and friends. The Natyacharya was being felicitated at the function and his book *NATYA-LOKA* released.

As K.V. Marthy, Industrialist-cum-President of the Committee succinctly put it in his welcome speech, "His research and experimentation in this art (of Bharatanatya) have given this art a new dimension. In his continuous pursuit of beauty, he draws inspiration from classics, different forms of arts, and ultimately from life itself. Publicity-shy, wedded only to art, an eternal wanderer journeying wherever Bharatanatya calls him,

Muralidhar Rao has grown into an institution, a confluence of the best in tradition and modernity."

Natyacharya K. Muralidhar Rao was born in Kasargod in 1924. He had his education in Mangalore. Literature, drawing and painting claimed his attention. Quest for a job led him to Chennai and Mumbai, where he learnt photography and worked in the fields of drawing, painting, photography and script-writing.

While in Mumbai, he learnt Kathakali from one Rajan Iyer. Both shifted to Mangalore and started 'Lalitha Kala Kendra'. His ambition to learn Bharatanatya led him to Kalakshethra, the Pandanallur maestro, Chokkalingam Pillai and Rujarathnam of Cochin. Shifting to Bangalore, he worked as one of the editors of the Junior Encyclopaedia "Jnanaganothi" and as a cartographer for the Sharada Press. His passion for dance, however, forced him to return to the dance field as a guru. He was past forty by then.

Since 1973, he has been residing in Mysore, running a dance institution named 'Nrityasharam'. Many aspirants have rolled out of that hallowed precincts. To name a few are Dr.Vasundhara Doraswamy, who runs Vasundhara Performing Arts Centre, in Mysore, Divya Adhikari, Vani Ramesh and Nandini Raman (who run institutions in USA), Manochelaya (formerly Katia Legeret of France, who runs a dance-school in Paris,

Shubharani Balar of Bangalore, K. Ramamoorthy Rao and Krupa Phadke of Mysore, who all dance schools of their own.

Despite such a galaxy of illustrious disciples, he disclaims with all humility "On witnessing the artistic expression of my disciples, I realise that what I taught them was bare grammar and parsing. The composition and the figures of speech, which are the real "manodharma" aspects, have been developed by them on their own as artistes."

Muralidhar has been honoured by several organisations with awards and titles, including the State Sangeetha-Nritya Academy in 1980-81. His total commitment to dance has made him remain a bachelor. "I was too busy to think of marriage. Instead I am wedded to the Art", he remarks. He has the satisfaction that the path he chose was not wrong, though the destination is far away. He has been a "parivrajaka" throughout his life and will continue to be one.

Deep study of lakshana-granthas and his skill in drawing prompted him to write a book on dance titled 'Nritya-Loka' with sketches penned by him. The book was released by R. Gam, the well-known industrialist of Mysore, who also presented a purse of Rs. 1,03,500/- collected by the Samithi to the Natyacharya. In addition, Sri G.N. Ashokavardhana of Athree Book Centre, Mangalore, (Publishers of the book) presented the author Rs. 50,000

as royalty. In a gesture worthy of emulation, G.N. Ashokavardhana, the publisher as well as R.V. Srinivasa Murthy and R.S. Mohnn, the printers, were specially honoured on the occasion.

While replying to the felicitations, Murlidhara Rao recalled that 28 years ago in 1970 he felt that publications in Kannada on Bharatanatyam were few and had tried his hand to write a book. After writing about 250 pages, he felt that it was turning out to be a history of our country, instead of being a work on dance. He realised that fresh ideas were manifesting themselves every minute and as such, it required much more experience and study to write even an acceptable book about Bharatanatyam.

This made him drop the project. Fortunately for the world of dance and Kannadigas in particular, he was able to complete the work last year. Again, his powerful ego, which any artiste worth the name should have, came in the way of begging someone to publish the book. It was providential that the senior art critic of Mysore, G.T. Narayana Rao, recognised the worth of both the artiste and the work and voluntarily offered to have the book published through his son's publishing house. Rest is history.

The programme concluded with a Bharatanatyam recital by his disciple Srividya Raman who runs the Smaradha Sangeetha Nrithya Kala Parishat in Mudikeri. Srividya had learnt dance right from a young age. The recital was conducted by the Nattiyacharya himself with Ramushesha on the vocal, M.A. Krishna Murthy on mridanga, A.V. Prakash and



Kum. Srividya Raman, Mudikeri

A.P. Srinivas, on flute and violin. It was a fitting finale to the occasion.

K. Ramamurthy Rao, dance-guru and Secretary of the Sanman Samithi, proposed a vote of thanks.

K.B. Ganapathy, Editor of the City evening paper *Star of Mysore* remarked that the difference between a teacher and a guru has its parallel between a mercenary and a patriotic soldier. In such a reckoning, Murlidhar Rao is a true-blood soldier, a complete guru, teaching Bharatanatyam, choreographing new items, simultaneously imparting his interest in music, literature, painting, line-drawing and yoga to his disciples.

The release of his magnum opus *NATYA-LOKA*, a fulfilment of an ambition for Narayacharya Murlidhar Rao. On that happy occasion, he speaks to the well-known art columnist G.T. Narayana Rao, about his style and related matters.

## An Interview with Muralidhara Rao

**Q.** What is the speciality about the Pandanallur style?

**A.** In jatis — the rhythmic structures as defined by the mridanga beats which trigger and murish nritta movements — we insist on variety. Repetitions are completely avoided. While depicting emotion, gentle and elegant suggestions (dhwani) are hinted. Vulgar shows, telling effects and clap-evoking poses are forbidden.

**Q.** What is wrong with poses?

**A.** While presenting a pose the artist becomes 'audience-conscious' and to that extent creativity suffers. Sensational high jumps and rough movements have no place here. Face being the index of the mind, expression is the very manifestation of creativity. Bharatanatyam is not dull dance!

**Q.** Future of Bharatanatyam?

**A.** Its potential is rich. It is in a parental position to all Indian dances. With great Gurus emanating it can unravel new treasures of art and explore new vistas of creativity. Until then it may mark time. But it will never die. Because the very soul of Indian culture has shaped this complete form of art.

**Q.** Message to young aspirants?

**A.** Total devotion to art, intense practice throughout, imbibe life's message from all sources, utter humility at peaks of success and firm faith in our culture at moments of despair — follow these dicta prescribed by our elders. Forsake not art, for, art is life.



## When Strings take on wings

— S.N. Sivaswamy

I must confess that in the early days of Radio, at any rate in the South Indian Stations, we had treated the Sitar in the most cavalier fashion, often using recordings of sitar recitals as 'Fillers' to bridge time gaps between two successive programmes. Speaking for myself, it was only after the introduction of the National Programme of Music that, I got a chance of listening to full length sitar recitals. After hearing and cultivating a penchant for the lovely strains of the sitar, I became an ardent fan of the great artistes of my day like Ravi Shankar, Vilayat Khan, Nikhil Banerji and others.

Of these, I was more familiar with the style of Ravi Shankar as he was for sometime on the staff of All India Radio as Conductor of the National Orchestra and then as the Producer of Music. Since then I have had occasion to listen to him any number of times and followed his concert circuit with great interest.

Although, I am yet to fix my hands on a copy of his astronomically high priced autobiography, I possess a number of his long-playing records including his experiment in fusion music, that is, the duet with violinist Yehudi Menuhin. Also in my collection are a few spell-binding duets between Ravi Shankar and his illustrious brother-in-law Ali Akbar Khan on Sarod with the redoubtable Alla Rakha on the Tabala.

I first met Ravi Shankar as he pranced up the steps of

the Mysore Station of All India Radio for his Radio concert before a selected audience in the Central Studio. I was struck by his sprightliness and affable manners as I shook hands with him and introduced myself. I thought he was very handsome although a trifle short. Besides, he was businesslike and wasted no time in formalities and pleasantries, and headed straight to the dais, bowed to the applauding audience and started tuning his sitar. As I remember, he played Rag Bihag on that occasion. Unlike in Carnatic music, Bihag in Hindustani music is a Major Raga and is dealt with much more elaborately. Ravi Shankar settled down with a leisurely alap and proceeded to jhaki and gat in three tempos, entrancing us with a veritable feast of a highly evocative kind of music. Later, talking to a few of us, he explained that he was rather fond of Bihag with its two Madhyamas playing hide and seek with the other swaras, creating an intricate pattern all along.

In later years, Ravishankar unfolded his great and amazing versatility, and shone not only as a top ranking performing artiste, but also as a music composer, orchestra leader, innovator, teacher and populariser of classical music.

Ravi Shankar was assisted by a number of skilled Tabala accompanists, both young and old. Among them, Chaturlal, who died very young (also an employee of All India Radio) was his close companion, and the perfect understanding between the two was a

perennial source of delight to their multitude of admirers. Of the other eminent Tabala accompanists who embellished his programmes, I can readily recall Jnan Prakash Ghosh, Allah Rakha, Kankai Datta and Nikhil Ghosh.

Ravi Shankar's forays into the film world resulted in some of the most haunting melodies both of classical and folk varieties. 'Pather Panchali', 'Anuradha' and Attenborough's 'Gandhi' were stamped with his own magical brand of music. The background score of 'Gandhi' as it followed the Mahatma's journey through rural India, featured as a pictorial diary, is mesmerising. Another film venture of Ravi Shankar's—Gulzar's 'Meera' is memorable as much for its deeply moving songs as for his impeccable rhythmic sense displayed in the raven of a scintillating drum ensemble in one particular sequence.

Ravishankar freely borrowed from Carnatic music and could be as expressive in 'Hamsadwani', 'Keerawani', 'Chaukeshi' or 'Sinhendra Madhyamam' as in 'Maru Bihag', 'Piloo' or 'Ponrya Dhanashri'.

His repertoires of recorded music include such sparkling gems as the crisp, light hearted rendering of 'Hamir', the romantic 'Gara', the emotional 'Madhuvanti', the dignified 'Bhimpalas' and the 'Sindhu Bhairavi' duet of unsurpassed artistry with Ali Akbar Khan on the Sarod.

(Contd. on Page-19)

## *"Professionalism in Music is on the wane?"*

— Prameela Lochan



Prof. Rajabhau Sontakke

**D**r. Rajabhau Sontakke is a product of destiny. Having damaged his eyes due to a serious accident, he lost his eyesight. That seemed a catalytic stimulant in his ambition when he chose music as his full time profession.

Trained under the mastery of Pt. Omkarnath Thakur for 15 years, Sontakke went on to teach at the Benares Hindu University, Benares, from 1950 to 1988, when he retired as Professor in music.

Settled in Bangalore from the last nine years, the 70-year-old Rajabhau Sontakke along with his musician wife Smt. Mani and son Prakash Sontakke has established the 'Hindustani Sangeet

Vidyapeeth' at Shankarmutt Road in Bangalore. With a Doctorate from Benares Univ. in vocal music and violin, his aim is to propagate Hindustani music in a City he feels that needs a lot more exposure to good Hindustani music.

### **Excerpts from an interview.**

**Q:** What prompted you to leave Benares and settle down in Bangalore?

**S:** After retirement, it seemed a natural choice since I had a site here and my wife is from Bangalore. Although I found the people very nice here, the musical environment is not the same as Benares. Even if Carnatic music is predominant, I've always wondered that for such a large city as Bangalore,

one hears very little of Hindustani music. In fact, 9 years ago I'd heard of only two senior artistes in Bangalore: Pt. Rama Rao Naik and Pt. Seshadri Gavai. This was one of my main reasons to start Hindustani Sangret Vidyapeeth, a school that imparted training in Hindustani vocal and instrumental music and offering recognised Degrees.

**Q:** What discipline of learning does your institute offer?

**S:** We concentrate more on vocal music. A few instruments such as the violin, guitar, tabla and harmonium are also taught. For those interested in taking up exams, the institute is affiliated to the Khairagarh University and the Prayag Sangit Samiti, Allahabad.

At present we have around sixty students and approximately around 35 who can appear for the exam. Examiners are invited from Nagpur, Mumbai and other places. Both the theory and practical exam is held under their supervision. The exam levels are from the second year onwards. The Degrees offered by Prayag Sangit Samiti are Prahakar and Pravin, equivalent to B. Music and M. Music of Khairagarh Univ.

**Q:** What is the use of a Degree for a performing artiste?

**S:** I hear many people saying this, but I don't believe theory and practical knowledge are two separate things. They are equally important to



understand music completely. What's the use of learning 15 ragas and earning through performances without having any knowledge about our Mani's or the ragas.

I was personally keen on getting a University Degree for my students since, unfortunately the Bangalore University has discontinued this facility.

**Q:** What are the opportunities available to graduate musicians?

**S:** In North India, we have many good opportunities and good jobs since music is taught in schools, colleges and universities. Over here there aren't many opportunities. I hope the government will provide for schemes that assure jobs for musicians.

**Q:** What is your experience as a teacher in Bangalore?

**S:** Very few want to be full-time performers whilst few want to take it up professionally. They prefer having a job alongside. We are also concentrating on building educated listeners. Since we teach it as an art form.

When we accept students we have to see their level of interest, talent and expectations. Our desire is to create the desire for music and encourage students both talented and the less talented.

**Q:** How did you get interested in music?

**S:** Although fond of music, I had no desire to pursue it full time. But when I lost my eyesight at the age of nine, it seemed inevitable that I took up music as a profession.

**Q:** When did you meet Pt. Omkarnath Thakur?



Rajubhai and Wile Mani

**S:** I'd been learning from 1938 under my first guru, Shama Rao Elayichi, in Nagpur, for ten years. It was in 1948, with my guru's recommendation, that I reached Surat to learn from Pt. Omkarnath Thakur and was with him till his end in 67 Dec. He was instrumental in taking me to Benares where I finally established myself.

**Q:** How was he as a teacher?

**S:** Anything I say will fall short of his capacity. He was a complete musician. He had studied how a tanpura should be played, how to develop the voice and sing with discretion yet filled with emotion, shashtra and aesthetics. He taught us to respect the nature of each raga and not present tans simply because the voice was flexible. In fact, he was such a fastidious teacher that he insisted on teaching the basic notes to all the new students

for two to three weeks before sending them to other faculty. This he did in spite of his fame and recognition. I can say that with his blessing and teaching, I am imparting the same to my students.

**Q:** On his popularity as a performer?

**S:** The purpose of music is to touch the heart. I'll tell you an incident that repeated regularly during the All India Conference held in Benares. For days on end the tongawallas would remind one another of Pt. Omkarnathji's concern and congregate to hear him perform. On that day not a single tonga could be hired.

**Q:** What is the rule of a performer today?

**S:** They should assimilate the values of a good performer and take the initiative to propagate music correctly. How many of our senior, well-known artistes are committed to the

cause of maintaining the quality of music without diluting and becoming mere entertainment? We complain that the public has changed, but who has changed the public? The artistes themselves give the public pulsating, rhythmic music and have changed the performer demands.

**Q:** What are the qualities of a good performance?

**S:** A vocalist should cultivate a good, strong and melodious voice. A performer should never take the public for granted nor perform merely to public demand but please the audience with proper selection of ragas and presentation. They should avoid unnecessary mannerisms and

a performer's virtuosity should not become his limitation. A bad performance can only cause discomfort and tension for the audience.

**Q:** On some of the new trends being practised?

**S:** I fail to understand the new trend to tune the tanpura to Ni Sa Sa Sa when we've always tuned it to Pa Sa Sa Sa. Where is the relevance of shruti Ni while performing a raga with karnal Ni? Singing in ati vilambit is another unnecessary practice. There is so much gap between two syllables that the gist of the bandish is lost. These days a performer is rated good only if he is able to render speedy tans and unnecessary gimmicks.

These days I find all ragas whether Jugiya or Rageshree sung in a similar fashion. How many understand usage of shruti and swara differences in different ragas?

**Q:** The role of an audience?

**S:** We have many listeners today, but few educated listeners. There are many artistes who are not popular, but should be respected for their knowledge. Unfortunately, the audience is exposed only to a few popular artistes such as Hariprasad Chaurasia, Shivkumar Sharma, Anjad Ali Khan and the like.

I strongly feel that whatever the audience is accepting as good music is more of a public stunt.

## Rangashree Feted



Rangashree

The well-known local Bharathanatyam dancer and Artistic Director of Kinkini, Rangashree has just returned after a very successful performance-cum-lecture demonstration tour of U.S.A., Canada and the U.K.

To celebrate Rangashree's successful tour, her disciples recently got up a programme of group dances—entitled

NATYAMALA at H.N. Kalakshetra. It was conceived, choreographed and managed by her senior students. Dr. Jeevaraj Alva felicitated Rangashree on the occasion. Lalit Tulsyan, an industrialist was the guest of honour.

She was selected, after a rigorous 5-stage selection process, as a member of the team under the Rotary International Group Study Exchange Programme to visit RI District 6000, Ohio District, USA. In her 30-day assignment she visited a number of rural, semi-rural and urban areas in Ohio district and Canada and presented a number of lecture-demonstrations on Bharathanatyam besides a recital at the RI District Conference at Lima, Ohio for American audiences.

After her Rotary

assignment, Rangashree went on an extensive tour of USA for nearly two and half months during which she gave Bharathanatyam recitals at Los Angeles, San Jose (San Francisco), Salt Lake City (Utah), Houston (Texas), Pittsburgh, Detroit, New York and New Jersey and a number of lec-dems at many other venues.

She also conducted short-duration workshops at Milwaukee, Los Angeles and Detroit. She visited a number of cultural institutions/studios, both American and Indian, which gave her an opportunity to interact and exchange notes/ideas with other artistes.

On her way back she visited the UK and gave a lec-dem in London for an Indian gathering.

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## On the Ladder of Fame

— B. S. S. Rao in Arizona



Asha Gopal, left, and Thulasi Shamasundar

**D**ance, music, and painting combined with the knowledge of Western Violin, Chorus singing make Kum. Thulasi Shamasundar, an artiste who could achieve a status in both Eastern and Western ethos. She is making headway in all these since her age of five. She is a symbol of East-West culture.

Thulasi took to Bharathanatya under Asha Gopal, a popular name around Arizona. Asha has established a cultural link between Arizona and Karnataka since over a decade. Later, Thulasi took keen interest in Carnatic vocal music, an essential ingredient to Bharathanatya. Recently, Thulasi performed her "Ranga Pravesha" at Bangalore which was well attended.

Looking at the talent of this pretty young artiste the prestigious Phoenix Children Chorus, a cultural organization, has selected her as an outstanding young talent for its musical "Chorus" singing, an aspiration of many youngsters of Phoenix. Thulasi took part in a prestigious "Chorus Singing" during the visit of Princess Anne of UK, in the presence of the Mayor of Phoenix and the Governor of Arizona. She has taken part in many events of state level festivals in Arizona State.

Thulasi's interest in the arts does not stop at this. She is a versatile painter with a burning desire to paint beautiful landscapes, rivers, and other natural life.

Though Bharathanatya is her primary interest she indulges in other art forms, thus working a long day even during holidays. The dedication, involvement, interest could make this youngster climb the ladder of fame in the days to come. Thulasi has maintained true Indianhood amidst the glamour-world of U.S.A.

Shamasundar and Uma take keen interest to preserve our cultural values. Recently, the family took part in a TV serial titled "INDIA" which is part of the curriculum in local schools to impart knowledge about other countries, particularly cultural rich India. This small family of three takes all pains to promote Indian music, and dance. The family has hosted many renowned artistes from India.

It was interesting to know that the first ever Carnatic music concert in Arizona was organised by him in the early eighties with T.V. Shankaranarayan was the spirit behind the recent Kannada Sammelana in Phoenix in Feb. 98, when many high profile Government officers from Karnataka visited and participated in the festival.

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## Shankar Joshi remembered

Shruti N.



The anniversary of Pt. Shankara Sadashiva Joshi, a Hindustani classical vocalist of Gwalior Gharana, falls during July-August. Pt. Joshi is remembered by his students every year through a memorial concert under the aegis of Hindustani Sangeeta Kalakara Mandali.

Pt. Joshi hailed from Deygiri a hamlet in Haveri District. Music was inborn with Pt. Joshi. He had his training under Guru Pt. Shankar Dikshit Janthalli.

Seeking encouragement and patronage Pt. Shankara Joshi came to Bangalore in October, 1942. He was a perfectionist, capable of presenting any raga with ease.

Particularly his presentation of Adana and Puriya were impeccable. He had the ability to simplify any new raga, succeeding in overcoming its intricacies. He helped his students to get an easy insight into the raga. To create an atmosphere he insisted in aiming at 'Sur Bharan', i.e., to fill it with melody.

He had good mastery over *taus* (swara patterns rendered in a quick speed), especially *Phirat*, which he executed effortlessly. Pt. Joshi had the keen sense of determining the course of *Jodi Ragas* like *Hindol-Bahar*.

Pt. Joshi's students include

Pt. D. B. Harindra, veteran vocalist and teacher of high calibre, Smt. Vasanthi Devi (Pt. Harindra's sister) and Pt. Rajiv Taramithi, a sound maestro of repute.

After having lived in Bangalore for about 20 years, Pt. Joshi's health started to deteriorate in 1960. He passed away at the young age of 57 years in 1966. On August 16, Master Abhijit Shetty and Kuma Shruti Namavaty, students of Pt. Harindra paid a fitting tribute to the great musician through their recitals. Sri. C. G. Ananthaswamy on Harmonium, S. N. Gaikwad and Master Adarsha Shetty on Tabala, provided the accompaniment.

(Contd. from Page 13)

I remember one special evening with Ravi Shankar at K.V. Iyer's 'Vyayamushala' in J.C. Road, when he was at the peak of his form. The enthusiasm of the small group of connoisseurs was spontaneous and it was clear that Ravishankar was delighted by the response he had elicited from his audience. Among the audience, sitting right in front of me was Ashok Kumar, the great film personality. He turned back a couple of times to whisper and check up which raga Ravi Shankar had just commenced.

(To be concluded)

## Musical Dictionary

Dear Editor,

The first-ever Biographical Dictionary of Carnatic Composers, Musicians, Musicologists, etc., comprising four volumes titled A Garland, Another Garland, Yet Another Garland and the Fragrant Garland covering about 1400 lives is before the public. There is persistent requests to include some lives which do not find place due to lack of positive and precise information.

It has therefore been decided to bring out the fifth and the last volume not only to bring in details of fresh lives, but to carry out corrections/amendments. Hence vocalists, instrumentalists, percussionists, musicologists, composers, etc., of standing and in the field are earnestly requested to participate in this dedicatory, non-commercial pioneering endeavour which is akin to a YAJNA and furnish all relevant details including place and date of birth, parentage, musical background, academic and musical training (with dates and names), debut, tours abroad, titles, publications, titles/honours, etc.

I am making this appeal through 'Phoenix' by courtesy of its enlightened Editor in the hope that all senior artistes not included in earlier volumes would respond quickly.

'GARLAND'

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## Ganakala Bushana

Dear Chandrasekhar,

In your August 1998 issue on Page-11, a report under headline "GANAKALA BUSHANA" appears.

This title is conferred by the Karnataka Ganakala Parishat in its annual MUSICIANS' CONFERENCE for the distinguished artistes who preside over the conference. Probably the organisers of the Bhadravati Utsav are not aware of this.

At least the musician who

received the title should have been aware of this and advised the organisers to confer a different title instead of the one used by the prestigious, old organisation.

An earlier instance springs to memory. The coveted title "Sangeeta Kalanidhi" conferred by the Madras Music Academy was conferred on a senior musician of Bangalore by some other organisation. The artiste who received the title, instead of advising the organisers about this, even used this in his letterhead. A sarcastic reference was made in the SRUTI magazine. Such inconsistencies should be avoided.

—K Venkataram, Bangalore

## Music Academy bills Padmini



The Music Academy, Madras, has invited petite Padmini Sirish, a proud student of Narmada, to dance in its annual Spirit of Youth Music and Dance festival 1998.

The prestigious 10-day fare will be on from October 12. There will be two sessions each day, featuring Music between 6 and 7 p.m., followed by dance between 7-15 and 8-45 p.m.

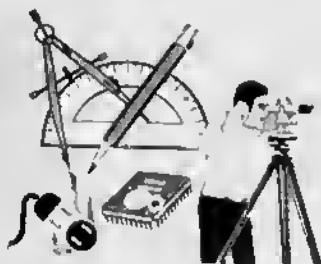
Padmini is scheduled to dance on October 16.



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For more details, contact

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